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Association of vascular endothelial growth factor expression with tumor angiogenesis and with early relapse in primary breast cancer.

Toi M, Hoshina S, Takayanagi T, Tominaga T.

Department of Surgery, Tokyo Metropolitan Komagome Hospital.

Angiogenesis is an independent prognostic indicator in breast cancer. In this report, the relationship between expression of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF; a selective mitogen for endothelial cells) and the microvessel density was examined in 103 primary breast cancers. The expression of VEGF was evaluated by immunocytochemical staining using anti-VEGF antibody. The microvessel density, which was determined by immunostaining for factor VIII antigen, in VEGF-rich tumors was clearly higher than that in VEGF-poor tumors ($P < 0.01$). There was a good correlation between VEGF expression and the increment of microvessel density. Furthermore, postoperative survey demonstrated that the relapse-free survival rate of VEGF-rich tumors was significantly worse than that of VEGF-poor tumors. It was suggested that the expression of VEGF is closely associated with the promotion of angiogenesis and with early relapse in primary breast cancer.

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